DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 255 037 FL 014 919

AUTHOR Thompson, Chad; McGary, Jane, Ed.
TITLE Athabaskan Languages and the Schools. A Handbook for Teachers.
INSTITUTION Alaska State Dept. of Education, Juneau. Bilingual/Bicultural Education Programs.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Civil Rights (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 84
GRANT G008200907
NOTE 85p.; For related documents, see FL 014 918-920.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alaska Natives; *Athapascan Languages; Bilingual Education; Classroom Techniques; Cultural Influences; Enrollment Trends; Information Sources; Instructional Materials; Language Attitudes; *Language Usage; Language Variation; Linguistic Borrowing; *Minority Groups; Native Language Instruction; *Sociocultural Patterns

ABSTRACT

This is one of a series of handbooks designed to assist classroom teachers, bilingual-bicultural education and special education program staff, counselors, and school administrators in instructional services for students from native Alaskan language groups. The unique sociocultural and linguistic characteristics of Athabaskan language speakers as they relate to the school setting are addressed in this volume. Educational resources such as recommended readings; a listing of school districts enrolling students from this group; and sources of information, materials, and instructional assistance are provided. A prefatory section discusses language study in general, and an overview of Athabaskan languages, with distribution maps, introduces the text. Subsequent sections focus on aspects of Athabaskan languages and culture: historical and sociocultural factors (traditional forms of education, oral literature, present linguistic conditions, and the history of contact with European-American society), linguistic characteristics of Athabaskan and English (word order, verbs, tense and aspect, plurality, gender, sound systems, cultural patterns of communication, and the use of nonstandard English), recommended classroom language instruction strategies, and Athabaskan sound systems. Lists of additional resources and enrollment data are appended. (MSE)

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Athabaskan Languages and the Schools

A Handbook for Teachers

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Alaska Department of Education
Bilingual/Bicultural Education Programs
Juneau, Alaska

ATHABASKAN LANGUAGES AND THE SCHOOLS

A Handbook for Teachers

Written by
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Edited by
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Developed by
Alaska Department of Education
Bilingual/Bicultural Education Programs
Juneau, Alaska

1984

This publication was funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Technical Assistance and Training Programs, Grant Number G008200907. The opinions expressed herein do not, however, necessarily reflect the positions or policy of the U. S. Department of Education; no official endorsement by the U. S. Department of Education should be inferred.

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Published and Disseminated by
Alaska Department of Education
Pouch F
Juneau, Alaska 99811

First Printing, June, 1984
500 copies

Cover photo: Athabaskan doll; made by Katherine Harwood, Rampart and Fairbanks. Photo by Mark Daughhetee.

PREFACE

Alaska has always had a multiplicity of languages and cultures. Until 1930, Alaska Natives made up the majority of the State's population, speaking twenty Alaska Native languages, often English, and sometimes Russian.

Today, Alaska Native students comprise approximately 87 per cent of the language minority students enrolled in Alaska's public school bilingual-bicultural education programs. These students are from the Aleut, Athabaskan, Eskimo, Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian language groups. Other major language groups enrolled in programs include Spanish, Korean, Pilipino, Russian, Japanese, and Vietnamese,

The Department of Education has developed a series of handbooks designed to assist classroom teachers, bilingual-bicultural education and special education program staff, counselors and school administrators in improving instructional services for students from Athabaskan, Inupiaq, and Yup'ik language groups. These handbooks address the unique sociocultural and linguistic characteristics of each group as they relate to the school setting. They also provide educational resources such as recommended readings, listings of school districts enrolling students from each group, and sources of information, materials and instructional assistance for each language group.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Alaska Department of Education wishes to recognize the individuals who assisted in completing this handbook.

Much of the material in this handbook is based on presentations given by Eliza Jones and Velma Schafer at the 1983 Summer Institute on Bilingual/Special Education in Fairbanks, sponsored by the Department of Education. Eliza Jones further contributed by reading and commenting on the draft versions of the handbook, and by providing the author with many of the stories and other examples contained in it. Melissa Axelrod also made valuable contributions to the writing of this handbook. Larry Kaplan and Steven Jacobson, authors of the handbooks on Inupiaq and Central Yup'ik respectively, contributed many ideas; occasional passages from each handbook have been used in the others. Jane McGary typeset and edited the handbooks. Irene Reed has discussed the material with us at length and has proofread the work.

While each handbook benefited from the assistance of these individuals, final responsibility for the handbook rests with the Alaska Department of Education.

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FOREWORD

Purpose

This handbook has been designed to assist school districts in providing effective educational services to students from the group of Athabaskan languages.

This is one of three handbooks developed to increase school districts' and school personnel's understanding of selected Alaska Native language groups. They have been designed for use by administrators and all school staff who have responsibilities for the schooling of these students.

Development of the Handbook

The development of this handbook began in August, 1983, in response to the need for information regarding cultural and linguistic factors which should be understood in the school setting.

This handbook should be regarded as a first edition. It is difficult in one volume to depict the uniqueness and heterogeneity that characterize the languages in this group. It should be recognized that any language group is complex and diverse, having a variety of needs and characteristics based upon different experiences. Much more research and work need to be done to ensure successful schooling for this and other minority language groups in Alaska.

Mike Travis
Program Manager
Bilingual/Bicultural Education Programs

ATHABASKAN LANGUAGES

AND THE SCHOOLS

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THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE

A linguist's fascination with the study of language is based primarily on the complex nature of all language, man's foremost system of communication. Although the origin of language is uncertain, it is clear that all languages have evolved through time, changing with the history of the peoples who speak them. A language reflects the culture of the group who speak it by incorporating vocabulary appropriate to that culture. For example, Athabaskan languages have an elaborate vocabulary pertaining to moose-hunting, while Japanese has many different forms of address appropriate to particular situations. In a sense, a modern language recapitulates the history of social and cultural changes among its people, as new words are added and old words dropped to suit a changing environment. For example, even a superficial comparison of the language of Shakespeare with modern English will show how language can reflect the changing attitudes and conditions which English speakers have lived with over the past several centuries.

The grammatical system of a language is a systematic series of relationships which is part of the intellectual ability of anyone who speaks the language. The degree to which language is innate to humans, the way children learn languages, and the existence of so many different types of languages on earth all offer exciting possibilities for linguistic study.

As linguists try to learn about and describe different languages, they rely on a number of assumptions about the nature of all language; these may be considered universal linguistic truths. It is universally held true that all languages are equal in their ability to convey the thoughts of anyone speaking them, that all are effective and valid means of communication. No language is more suitable to human expression than any other, and none has ever been found to be more "primitive" nor more "advanced" in terms of the level of communication whose medium it is. The linguist's objective approach to language does not allow ranking languages as superior or inferior, but we will see that cultural bias or prejudice may lead a person to favor one language over another.

Virtually everyone learns at least one language as a child, and some learn more than one. Throughout history bilingualism (the knowledge of two languages) and often multilingualism (the knowledge of many languages) have been common among people living where several languages are spoken. In Alaska, for example, in areas where the territory of one Native group bordered on another's, it was common for members of one group to speak the language of their neighbors as well. For example, even though Koyukon and Kutchin (see map on page 15) are extremely different, many people near their border have always been able at least to understand and often to speak their neighbors' language through trade, intermarriage, and ceremonial gatherings. On the other edge of their territory, Koyukon Athabaskans often learned Inupiaq Eskimo and had well established trading festivals with the coastal people. Bilingualism is of course still quite common in Alaska today, especially among Native people who speak English in addition to their own language.

In an environment such as an Alaskan village where more than one language is used, different factors influence which language is spoken in what situation, determining the role of each language in the community. These factors can be quite complex, but generally we can recognize each language's domains, that is, the situations where a bilingual person will choose one language over the other. In such cases, there is often a so-called "intimate" language that is not the national or majority language and is used in the home and among family and community members. In official contexts where one deals with government, institutions, or people unrelated to the home community, people are obliged to speak English, since outsiders do not speak the home language. In situations like this, it is typical that speakers of the minority language, an Athabaskan language in this case, will learn the majority language, that is, English, but outsiders will not learn the local, minority language.

The relation between minority and majority languages brings us to the realm of linguistics pertaining to how people use language and how they feel

about different languages. Many people have favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward certain languages, usually depending on the person's perception of the group that speaks the language in question. If that group is held in high esteem, their language too may be regarded favorably. If for some reason the group is disliked or accorded low social status, their language too may be looked on with disfavor. Such attitudes are often expressed in statements that a given language is not as good as one's own, or that it sounds unpleasant. Thus non-linguistic considerations, that is, social attitudes, can interfere with our appreciation and acceptance of languages other than our own. Sometimes the negative attitudes of other segments of society can influence people to feel badly about their own native language, causing conflict and confusion within the individual.

Attitudes about language play an important role in situations where more than one language is used, especially where a majority language such as English exists alongside a minority language, in this case Athabaskan. It is important to remember that all languages deserve recognition and respect as equally elaborate and effective systems of communication. Becoming familiar with another language and culture inevitably increases one's respect for them. Learning about another language also brings to light the linguistic accomplishments which characterize that language. No student of English can help but be awed by the genius of Shakespeare; so too do students of Athabaskan languages come to love and appreciate their rich oral literature.

At this point we should explain what linguists mean by "language" and "dialect." A language is a distinct and unified system of spoken communication which can be divided into different dialects. Dialect differences distinguish particular groups within a language community, generally based on such factors as geography, socioeconomic status, or ethnic origin. American English includes all three types of dialects; for example, New Yorkers and Texans often have identifiable geographical dialects, members of the upper class on the East Coast may speak with an accent or vocabulary that

sets them apart, and ethnic groups like Mexican-Americans or Irish-Americans may have distinct features in their speech. Athabaskan dialects, on the other hand, are almost exclusively regional or geographical. What distinguishes a dialect from a language is that people who speak different dialects of the same language can generally understand one another, while people who speak different languages cannot unless they are bilingual. Languages may be related, like English and German or Yupik and Inupiaq, but if they are truly separate languages, they are different enough to make communication between them difficult. In this way, we find that Koyukon and Tanaina are related but different languages, while Upper Koyukon and Central Koyukon, whose speakers can understand each other, are different dialects of the same language.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ATHABASKAN LANGUAGES

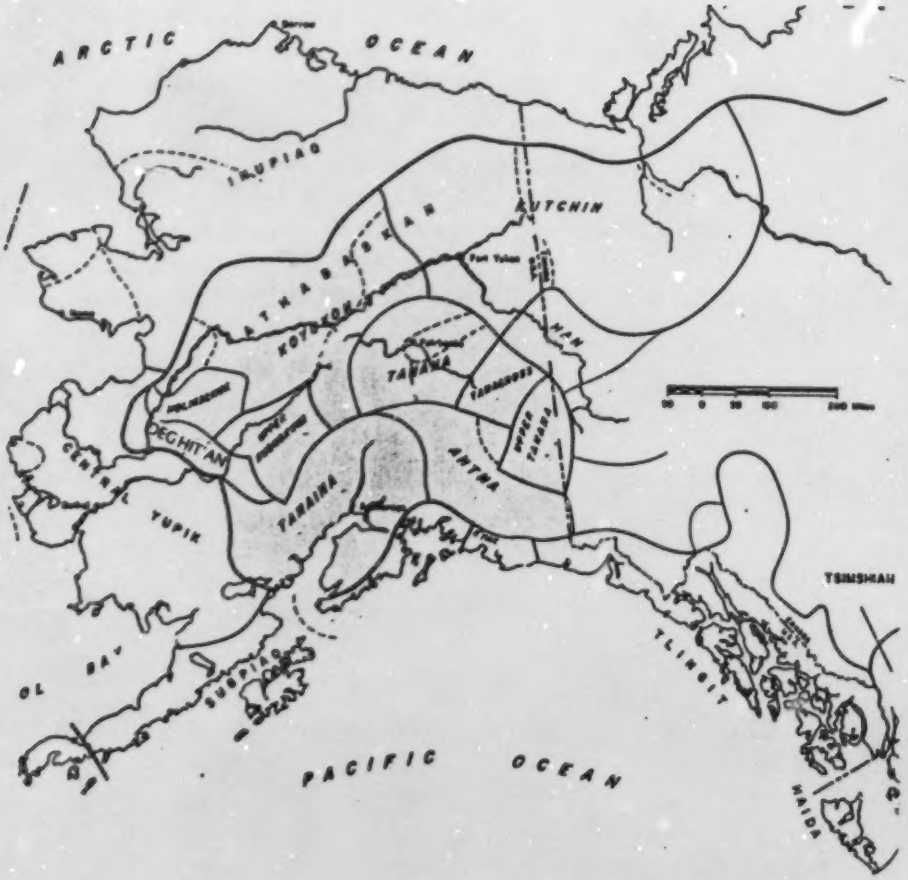
The word *Athabaskan* refers both to a people and to a group of related languages. The word itself does not come from any Athabaskan language; it is an anglicized version of the Cree Indian name for Lake Athabasca in Canada. Athabaskan languages are spoken throughout the interior of Alaska and the interior of northwestern Canada. There are Athabaskan people in northern California and southern Oregon. The Navajo and Apache people of the southwest speak Athabaskan languages too. Map 1 shows the distribution of Athabaskans in North America; Map 2 shows the territories of the eleven Athabaskan languages spoken in Alaska. More information is found in the 1982 map "Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska," which we recommend to readers.

When linguists say languages are related, they mean there are systematic similarities among them. Compare, for example, the words below in four Alaskan Athabaskan languages:

	Holikachuk	*Tanana*	*Koyukon*	*Upper Kuskokwim*
'my mouth'	sidhot	sedhot	silo(t)	sizo
'I'm sitting'	dhisdo	dhesdo	lisdo	zisdo
'my belt'	sidhidh	sedhedha'	silila'	siziza'

Notice that where Holikachuk has *dh*, Tanana also has *dh;* these sounds correspond consistently with *l* in Koyukon and *z* in Upper Kuskokwim. When languages share regular, consistent correspondences in their structures and sound systems, we can conclude that they are members of a single language family, that is, that their similarities result from their common descent from one ancestral language.

Map 1. The distribution of Athabaskan languages in North America.



Map 2. Athabaskan languages of Alaska.

It is important that these correspondences be regular and systematic. It is not enough to find similar words between languages. For example, many Russian words were borrowed into Eskimo and Athabaskan languages, but we cannot say that Russian is historically related to either Athabaskan or Eskimo because no systematic patterns of similarity exist.

The eleven Athabaskan languages of Alaska are separate though related languages. Within most of these languages we can distinguish different dialects. The word *dialect* means a variety of a language. When two people speak with noticeable differences but are able to understand each other without difficulty, they are speaking two dialects of the same language; for example, people from Brooklyn and Texas speak noticeably different ways, but they can understand each other easily. In Alaskan Athabaskan, the Koyukon language is divided into three dialects: Lower (spoken in Kaltag and Nulato), Central (Koyukuk, Huslia, Hughes, Allakaket, Galena, Ruby), and Upper (Rampart, Stevens Village, Manley Hot Springs). There are regular differences in pronunciation and vocabulary among these three dialects. For example, words that begin with *m* in Lower Koyukon begin with *b* in the other two. Words with the sounds *g, k, k'* in Lower and Central have respectively *j, ch, ch'* in Upper. Despite these differences, people who speak one of these dialects have no difficulty understanding those who speak another.

The differences between *languages* are much more pronounced than the differences between dialects. People who speak different languages cannot understand each other fully, although sophisticated speakers of closely related languages can often communicate to some extent. The differences between Alaskan Athabaskan languages can be compared readily with the degrees of difference between European languages. Koyukon and Tanana, for example, might be said to be as different as French and Spanish, while Koyukon and Kutchin might be as different as English and Italian.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS

Traditional forms of education

Every culture has some way of passing on to its younger members all the kinds of information they need to become functioning adults in that society. This is called "education." In modern American culture, education takes place in formal institutions at specific times and places. We should not assume that because our method of education is formal, it is superior (or inferior) to any other. It is merely different.

Traditional Athabaskan education is far less institutionalized and formal. It is also less direct and explicit, but this is not to say it is less effective. Life in the northern forest is very difficult. In older times especially, knowledge of skills related to subsistence was crucial for survival.

We cannot give a complete account of how each kind of cultural knowledge was passed on, nor do we want to urge the use of traditional Athabaskan educational methods in schools. We will simply present the basic principles of traditional education in the hope that readers can thus better understand community attitudes toward education and determine if and how the school program can benefit from the way students learn at home. We will discuss two forms of traditional Athabaskan education, observation and storytelling.

If one asks older Athabaskan people how they learned skills like snowshoe-making, beading, sewing, or hunting, they will probably say they had to learn on their own. They learned such skills as children by watching adults carefully and eventually making their own attempts. Adults rarely gave them specific directions about how to do something. In traditional Athabaskan culture, children are taught from the earliest age always to observe what others are doing. A girl will watch her mother sew over the years, until the day her mother asks her to sew something herself. When the girl begins to sew, she is told to try to make as few mistakes as possible, because ripping

out the seams too often will establish bad working habits. She will go to her mother for help only if she cannot figure out for herself how to proceed, and only then will her mother give her explicit directions.

The philosophy behind this is that people should become self-sufficient and think for themselves. There may be a time when there are no people around to ask, and one's survival may depend on being able to improvise.

Sometimes adults may deliberately tell children things that are not true. The purpose of this is to teach children not to believe everything they hear but to think and reason independently. For example, once two Tanaina Athabaskans were out hunting with the son of the teacher in their community. The two Indians were wearing rubber boots and the White boy had on mukluks. They circled around and came back on their own tracks. One man told the boy, "It looks like someone came by here; it looks like two White men and an Indian." The boy agreed. It was only when they followed the tracks back to their own gear that the boy realized he had been fooled. The purpose of this trick was not primarily to joke at the boy's expense; he was being taught in the Athabaskan manner how to think for himself.

An Athabaskan man told this story about his childhood. He was out with a bear-hunting party, and as they were pulling the bear out of its den, his grandfather told him, "Run! Run!" The boy knew the bear was dead but he backed off anyway. Later, when they were eating around the campfire, the men gave the boy some of the meat from near the eye. Eating this delicacy, the boy remarked, "This is good!" only to be asked, "Well, what did you run for?" The boy was not being mocked, he was being educated.

Oral Literature

The Athabaskans have a rich tradition of storytelling. Oral narratives in their culture fulfilled all the functions written literature does in ours, and one of these functions, of course, is education of the young. We will discuss only two of the many kinds of stories here: personal narratives, where the storyteller relates incidents of his own or some close associate's life; and

stories of distant time, about events that occurred as the world was being shaped into its present form.

One of the primary functions of personal narratives is to educate the young. Rather than being an excuse to boast about personal achievements, these narratives often recount mistakes the narrator has made. The implied moral of these stories is that young people should not make the same mistakes.

This does not mean that all personal narratives deal with blunders. Many are the stories of very skilled and resourceful people. Narrators tell of successes and subtly emphasize the hard work and positive cultural values that contributed to them. Some narratives describe in detail practical ways of coping with challenges; for example, successful hunters may recount the techniques they used on a hunt.

Stories about the lives of others serve the same purposes. They may tell of others' mistakes, such as breaking a taboo and having to suffer the consequences. Other stories relate the rewards that follow upon courageous or generous behavior. Children usually find these stories frightening or impressive enough that their behavior is influenced for the better. In traditional Athabaskan culture, children were not usually told explicitly how to behave, but stories did a good job of getting points across indirectly.

Athabaskan people have as part of their traditional heritage stories said to have taken place long ago when animals lived much like people and animals and humans could understand one another's speech. Raven, a powerful but often comical character, dominated many of the events of that time. These stories were and are still used to educate the young.

Distant-time stories give explanations for the present form of the world. More importantly, they instruct as to how one should behave toward the natural environment and toward other beings, both animal and human. In other words, these stories set forth the cosmology and morality of Athabaskan culture. Probably every culture in the world has a body of stories that do this; from the cultures of Europe and the Near East we are familiar with Greek and Roman mythology and the New Testament.

Besides these functions, the stories provided entertainment and creative activity for people. Listeners delight in the outrageous but predictable behavior of Raven. Many stories are exciting, frightening, or romantic; many depict real situations people still have to deal with at times. The stories were, however, to be taken very seriously; children as well as adults were expected to be quiet and pay attention during storytelling. Bad luck could result from falling asleep or leaving before the story ended.

Children learned the stories by hearing them over and over again. When they had memorized a story, they would be asked to retell it. First they learned simple, short stories with a lot of repetition, and later moved on to longer, more complicated stories.

High Language

The creative use of language in Athabaskan culture occurred in other genres besides stories. We will discuss here riddles, songs, and oratory. It is sometimes difficult for non-Athabaskans to understand what we may call the Athabaskan literary tradition (although "oral literature" is a somewhat contradictory phrase), partly because of the oral nature of this tradition and partly because its genres do not entirely match those of European-American tradition. Distant-time stories, for example, have been variously compared with myth, fiction, poetry, and drama, and there are elements of all these types in most performances of stories. Riddles and songs are similar to European-American lyric poetry; oratory is a genre common to both cultures.

Just as in English, in Athabaskan there are different levels of language. Athabaskans speaking English may refer to the special vocabulary and techniques of creative literature as "high language" or "high words." This kind of speech utilizes metaphorical images and unusual, often archaic words. This kind of language is used primarily by older, experienced speakers in songs, speeches, stories, and riddles; younger, less experiences speakers may have difficulty understanding it. The beauty and meaning of such lan-

guage is extremely difficult to translate into English, especially because there is almost no one who commands what we may call the highest registers of both Athabaskan and English.

Riddling

Riddles are the form of Athabaskan oral literature which most directly employ metaphorical language. Each riddle, in fact, is a single, brief metaphor; this form is used to train people in the use of "high language."

While riddling was an important tradition among some Athabaskan groups, it was infrequent or absent in others. The Koyukon, Tanaina, Ahtna, and Upper Tanana all had riddling traditions, but it appears that the Deg Hit'an and the Kutchin did not. There has been no documentation of the tradition in other Alaskan Athabaskan groups.

Riddling was once a serious tradition in European oral literature too; in folklore, answering a riddle is often a matter of life or death. In American culture today, however, riddles are told primarily by children as jokes, often depending for their effect not on metaphor but on puns (for example, "What's green and sings rock-and-roll music?" "Elvis Parsley").

Athabaskan riddles, on the other hand, are not meant to be jokes, although they can be delightfully entertaining. The answers to them often depend on subtle images and grammatical clues. The pleasure people take in riddling comes from discovering something previously unsuspected or unexperienced in imaginative language.

Riddles were traditionally told at the time of the winter solstice, when people spent much of their time assembled in villages or camps. Here they gathered to tell riddles. Although the riddles themselves were not jokes, riddling sessions were full of merriment. When someone guessed completely incorrectly or made up a comical answer, everyone laughed.

Here are a few examples of Athabaskan riddles. You will notice from these and those in other sources that many riddles refer to the natural environment. Another characteristic is that the images in riddles tend to be visual.

Chief Henry of Huslia told this riddle: "Wait, I see something. Something is acting like a dog that's lapping up broth." (Answer:) "Fire flaring up and down." Here the person guessing must visualize the same image the riddler has, in this case something tongue-like going up and down. Since the Koyukon word for "flame" is itself metaphorical, *kkun' tloola'*, literally "fire's tongue," knowing the Koyukon term helps in guessing the answer.

Another of Chief Henry's riddles is, "Wait, I see something. It looks like a cache that's leaning over in the other world." (Answer:) "A salmonberry." The salmonberry or cloudberry, which grows only one berry to a plant, stands up straight until it ripens and then leans over. Similarly, a cache is built erect but with time may lean to one side. Answering this riddle requires not only a good imagination but also good knowledge of the natural environment.

Athabaskan people sometimes say that they talk in riddles. This is literally true in certain contexts. When someone does not wish to speak of something directly, he or she may use a metaphor as indirect and imaginative as a riddle. There are examples of this kind of speech in Richard Nelson's *Make Prayers to the Raven* (pages 156, 172, 198). Another example occurs in an unpublished narrative by Chief Henry as he relates what he heard from a Nulato man. In Eliza Jones's translation,

> ...he said, "Something string-like snapped inside the one who sits by my thigh this spring when we were staying in camp at Kk'odaaloyagha." I didn't know what he meant, but my friend William explained to me that he meant his wife had died last spring when they were in spring camp at Kk'odaaloyagha.

The string-like thing referred to is the breath of life. It is not uncommon for people to use figurative language when speaking of deeply serious matters like death; there are a number of such expressions in English too, which young speakers of the language may not at first understand.

Eliza Jones, in an interview on the KUAC-FM radio program "Chinook," refers to the necessity of imagination in riddling:

> You really have to use your imagination for this kind of thing. You see things so differently, like when you look at a snowshoe and think of it as having a head and a tail and all those things. It refers to being really aware of things when you're out walking in the woods...the birch bark flapping in the wind and so on.

Another of Chief Henry's riddles is, "Wait, I see something. We're whistling along the edge of the bank. (But we never used to whistle a long time ago.)" (Answer:) "The wind blowing on a half-detached piece of birch bark. You know how a half-detached piece of birch back whistles when the wind is blowing against it."

Oratory

"High language" is also commonly used when people give speeches. We will give one example of the use of figurative speech in oratory, a speech by Shem Pete, a Tanaina Athabaskan. This speech was given in English and published in the book *Exploration in Alaska* (Cook Inlet Historical Society). Here Mr. Pete tells of his father's brother who was a medicine man and made a two-part prophecy before the arrival of Americans in Alaska. The first part of the prophecy, that White people would come with boats and flying machines and that many Native people would die of disease, has come true. The second part was that all the Whites would leave Alaska. Mr. Pete quotes his uncle:

> "There gonna be white man just like this sand," he pick it up in his hand, the sand. "You fellows gonna be not one place. Few here, few there, all over just scattered along like little berries between them white people. You all the Natives not gonna be staying one place. Be here, there, all over Alaska...." (p. 196)

He then tells how the White people will have to leave because of lack of food:

> "So I think, what the white man gonna eat out of? They can't live on the berries. They don't know how to hunt. It's gonna be tough for the white man...." (p. 196)

In the first statement we see two metaphors, the Whites as numerous as grains of sand and the Natives scattered around like little berries. Although he says "little berries" and describes them as being scattered about, berries are a prized part of the Native diet, so this metaphor expresses the value of the Native people too. The significance of this image is stressed in the second statement where he says Whites "can't live on the berries," expressing the fact that the Natives will not be able to support the White people.

In former days, Athabaskan people who were adept at using high language would participate in oratorical contests at potlatches and other gatherings. One person would give a speech containing one or more riddles or metaphors, and then another would do the same, answering the first speaker's riddles and posing one of his own. Different people made speeches until one of them could say no more or speak no better than the one before. Winning such a contest was called "sitting somebody down" by the Koyukon Athabaskans.

The oratorical style is not part of the dead past. At almost any potlatch or formal meeting of Athabaskans today, one can hear speeches embodying many elements of the traditional style, even though today the language of the speech may be English to accommodate listeners from other regions or younger generations.

Songs

Like riddles, songs use elaborate, controlled poetic or "high" language. Athabaskan cultures everywhere have many songs, some of them passed down from time immemorial and others composed by people of today. The best collection of Alaskan Athabaskan songs that has been published is that by Madeline Solomon, Koyukon, which includes nineteen songs and detailed notes on each.

Many Athabaskan songs are composed in honor of a deceased person and performed on the occasion of the memorial potlatch. These songs often refer to some good quality of the deceased which the composer misses. A free translation of the first song in Mrs. Solomon's collection is:

> My younger brother,
> he was from a well-to-do family;
> it was as if they leaned on riches.
> Why did it (the water) take him?
> Why did it take him?
> My younger brother,
> remember, people depended on them (his family) as a house needs corner-posts.

The third line and the final line both compare the deceased man and his family to a support on which others lean. The repeated central lines literally translate as, "Why did it (the water) take *them*." Thus the song praises not only the deceased but also his family. In a figurative sense, his death has meant the dissolution of what his family once was, so that the community grieves not only for the loss of an individual but also of a unified family. Either a literal or a free translation gives some of the sense of the song, but not its full meaning.

The Present Condition of Alaskan Athabaskan Languages

To understand the Athabaskan language situation in Alaska today, we must realize that it varies from region to region. To begin with, anyone who visits an Athabaskan area will observe that the Native language is spoken mostly by adults. There are in fact few children and teen-agers anywhere in Alaska who can speak fluent Athabaskan. At Venetie and Arctic Village there are small children who speak Kutchin; some children at Telida and Nikolai may understand Upper Kuskokwim; and some children in Tetlin and Northway can speak Upper Tanana. When we discuss the survival of a lan-

guage, we must consider the age of the youngest speakers of the language. If the youngest generation does not speak a language, this indicates that the language is not being passed on in the way it has traditionally been during its entire past history, as all languages are passed on, from parent to child, assuring the continuity of the language.

The process of language shift occurs when there is a discontinuity, when the child has a first language different from that of his parents. Most Alaskan Athabaskan children have English as their first language, even though their grandparents probably grew up speaking Athabaskan. The consequences of language shift vary with the situation. Among immigrants to the United States, for example, most grandchildren of immigrants learned to speak English better than the language of the "old country" (which they may not have learned at all), but this shift affected only the immigrant groups and not their ancestral language overall. That is, even if many or most Greek-Americans do not speak Greek, that language continues to be used in Greece as it has been for centuries. The kind of language shift occurring among Athabaskans functions similarly to that found among immigrants, but its effect is totally different. If a language does not continue to be used in its homeland, the shift could result in the death of the language. If an entire population—not merely emigrants or particular segments of society—abandon their language, the language is not renewed by being passed on and will eventually have no speakers.

A language with few or no children who speak it is called a moribund language, and if this situation is not changed, it will be a dead language, one with no native speakers. When a language dies, extensive written records of it may remain (as with Latin), or else nothing may remain. Writing and modern devices like tape-recording and video recording serve to document a language but they cannot maintain it as a creative medium. In Alaska, one language that has been recorded is already dead; this is Eyak, an Indian language of Prince William Sound distantly related to Athabaskan, of which only two partial speakers remain, living in different towns, so that the language is no longer used.

Language death is a tragic situation. People whose language is being lost may feel this loss very strongly. The last speakers of a language experience great loneliness, without people to communicate with in their native language and lamenting the end of a long cultural tradition. Anna Nelson Harry expressed this feeling of isolation very effectively in her "Lament for Eyak," published in *In Honor of Eyak*, pp. 155-157. Part of her lament, in English translation, is this:

> Around here,
> that's why this land,
> a place to pray,
> I walk around.
> I try to go there.
> Alone,
> alone around here I walk around on the beach at low tide.
> I just break into tears.
> I sit down on a rock.
> Only the Eyaks,
> the Eyaks,
> they are all dying off...
>
> Yes,
> why is it I alone,
> just I alone have survived?
> I survive.

Members of an ethnic group who have not learned the old language often feel deprived of their cultural tradition and feel alienated from their ancestral community. People outside the group who appreciate its culture regret the loss, for the loss of a language means the loss of a unique cultural treasure in the world, which thereby takes another step toward "monoculture," the prevalence of one dominant language and culture where once there were many.

If few or no children in Alaska speak Athabaskan, then almost no one here is learning an Athabaskan language as his native language and the future of the languages is at best uncertain. If it is any consolation, some Athabaskan languages in Canada and the southwestern United States remain quite strong. In fact, the number of Navajos who speak their Athabaskan language is larger than the entire Athabaskan population of Alaska.

History of contact with European-American society

The peoples and languages of Alaska were profoundly affected by European and European-American incursion. Contact can be divided into the Russian period, 1741-1867, and the American period, 1867 to the present. (See Michael Krauss's *Native Languages of Alaska: Past, Present, and Future* for a detailed historical account.) Russian rule in Alaska had the deepest impact on Aleuts and Yupik Eskimos, but also was important for some Athabaskans, especially the Tanaina of Cook Inlet, who were enslaved and exploited as fur-hunters for the Russian America Company. Other Athabaskans had contact with Russian traders and the technology they introduced.

We can get an idea of how much contact different Athabaskan groups had with the Russians by how many Russian loan words exist in each Athabaskan language. Most of these words are nouns borrowed to name items new to Athabaskans, like bullets, matches, flour, and sugar. There are approximately 350 Russian loan words in Tanaina, 85 in Koyukon, 65 in Upper Kuskokwim, and 50 each in Deg Hit'an, Tanana, and Ahtna. The Kutchin, who traded to the east with the Canadians, have none.

The period between 1867 and 1920 was one of military exploration and missionary activity. Explorers had little impact on Athabaskans but missionaries were a major force of cultural change. Some churches used the Native languages in their literature and services. The Anglicans (Episcopalians) under Robert McDonald began publishing the Bible and other materials in Kutchin in 1873, establishing a minor tradition of Native literacy.

They also published materials in Upper Koyukon. Roman Catholics, especially the Jesuit priests along the Yukon, studied Athabaskan languages and printed prayer books and liturgy in Deg Hit'an and Koyukon.

In the late nineteenth century, a concerted effort to influence and change Native Alaskan culture began in the form of missionization. There has been much debate about the role of missionaries and their long-term effects on Alaska, but in any case, it seems clear that most of them misunderstood and failed to respect the traditional systems of beliefs they encountered when they arrived. Of all the outsiders who came to Alaska, missionaries were the first whose goal it was to change the Natives into people like themselves.

The new religion profoundly disrupted traditional Native culture as missionaries introduced foreign ideas and values, presenting them as universal truths when they were actually artifacts of European cultures. They encouraged people to adopt the European-American life style, including dress, table manners, and other kinds of behavior which the newcomers admired in themselves and wished to see mirrored in the people they encountered. This cultural chauvinism was especially merciless in some areas where religious groups fought to eradicate Native music and dancing and the memorial potlatch. At the first Inuit Circumpolar Conference in Barrow in 1977, an Indian leader from Canada told those assembled, "When they come to change you, the first thing they will try to take from you are your drums. Never give up your drums."

The native language was another target of those who thought they would "improve" the Native people of Alaska. Education was to move Native people into the mainstream of American society; this was of course not the traditional sort of education by which Native people trained their children to take their adult roles in society, but European-style classroom education. The teachers were White people from the United States and the language of instruction was English. The first students came to school speaking only the language of their home, so a bilingual member of the community had to translate in the classroom. Many people who went to school in the early days report that, very understandably, they did not learn much.

Less beneficial to the future of Athabaskan languages were the policies established by the first Commissioner of Education for Alaska (1885-1908), the Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson. He and his colleagues strongly opposed the use of Native languages in churches and schools and believed that Alaskan Natives should be assimilated as quickly as possible into mainstream American culture, which they conceived as an integral system including everything from Christianity and English to hygiene and table manners, all of these customs universally desirable for humanity. When the U.S. Bureau of Education and later the Bureau of Indian Affairs assumed control of Alaskan shcools, they continued Jackson's policies. From 1910 on, the use of Native languages was expressly forbidden in American government and mission schools. Children were physically punished for using their own languages at school and parents were urged to speak whatever English they commanded to their children at home.

Although Jackson's educational philosophy is no longer the official policy of Alaskan schools, many individuals in the educational system, even up to the present day, have been hostile to the use of Native languages.

No schools in Alaska under the Territorial administration encouraged the use of any Native language. Most, in fact, actively discouraged it by punishing children for speaking their own languages, striking them, taping their mouths shut, and isolating individual offenders. Such mistreatment remains a vividly traumatic memory for many middle-aged Native people today. Not only did these attacks on their language strike at the foundations of the children's identity, but the forms the punishment took were violently at odds with accepted behavior in their culture. At the same time, school and government personnel told parents to speak English to the children at home, and fearful that their children would suffer punishment, the parents tried, even though many of them spoke very little English themselves.

It was the intent of the educational system to convince Native people that English was superior to their own languages as a means of communication. Few Alaskans would dispute the usefulness of English to those living here and nearly everyone would agree that English should be taught in the schools. Early educators, however, presented English not as a practical skill but as a moral necessity, thoughtless of the effect that this would have on

the local cultures and the self-respect of their people. This effect was indeed profound. As the school and other mainstream institutions have taken over the roles that traditionally belonged to the family and community, traditional activities and customs yielded to foreign ones. Thus children have come to know less and less about the culture of their ancestors.

The European-American educational system has imparted not only facts and skills but also cultural values. This has often created conflict and unease in the very people who were supposed to be helped. The implication that introduced customs, beliefs, and language are superior to indigenous ones has been very disruptive for people who grew up believing in the latter. It is complex enough to learn two sets of attitudes and traditions simultaneously without the added burden of prejudice and cultural dominance.

When a dominant culture is in contact with a minority culture, the minority may come to accept, to some extent, the majority's view of them. This is directly relevant to the change in the status of Athabaskan languages in Alaska. It is oversimplifying to say that parents followed orders and stopped speaking Athabaskan to their children. Rather, parents responded to the devaluation of their culture by outside institutions. Bombarded with negative attitudes, many people no longer felt proud to pass on their language and traditions.

Knowing something of this history is essential to understanding the present linguistic situation. A new teacher in a village will do well to understand some of the mistakes of the recent past, since they have shaped many of the attitudes and practices he or she will encounter. It is to be hoped that such an understanding will prevent continuation and repetition of those mistakes.

Even when overt suppression is not practiced, schools can have negative effects on Native languages. The mere presence of an English-speaking teacher may inhibit expression in the Native language, because out of courtesy, most people will speak only English in the presence of monolingual English speakers. There are other subtle and perhaps even unconscious ways in which teachers may convey negative feelings about the language of the

home and community, whether that is Athabaskan or some nonstandard variety of English. In this booklet we hope to explain the workings and effects of language interaction and attitudes toward language, in the hope that some understanding about Athabaskan languages and the linguistic situation in Athabaskan villages will make teachers more positively effective and encourage cooperative efforts toward respect for and continuation of Native languages and cultures.

Teachers coming to an Athabaskan village will notice significant differences between life in rural Alaska and the life they have been used to, differences that require changes in habits and behavior on their part. Many times the material changes, perhaps getting wood and water and keeping warm, are easier to deal with than the equally necessary changes in patterns of social behavior and teaching methods.

For example, a teacher may be puzzled or annoyed on occasions when most of the students seem tired and uninterested. He may become angry and strict. This approach might be appropriate in a larger community, but in a rural village the students' collective behavior may be the result not of a peer conspiracy but of some activity going on in the entire community. During a winter carnival or other celebration, the whole village participates. Children get very little sleep and may come to school exhausted. A teacher who has not alienated himself from the community will be sensitive to such events and not schedule difficult material on these days.

In general teachers should keep in mind the principle that the school is a part of the community. A school can teach its students how to function in mainstream American society without forcing them to renounce their own community. A teacher should guard against giving any conscious or unconscious message to his or her students that the village is something from which to escape. Such messages can come from a superior attitude on the part of the teacher, and it is easy to see how such an attitude might lower a child's self-respect, confidence, and interest in education.

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ATHABASKAN AND ENGLISH

All the languages of the world are complex, expressive, descriptive, and creative in their own ways. It is wrong to think that one language is more powerful in any of these areas than any other language. It is true that languages differ in structure, but they are all perfectly adequate means of communicating about anything people wish to speak of. Some people have characterized Athabaskan languages as "simple," "primitive," or "descriptive," unable to express abstract ideas. Our brief discussion of Athabaskan literary language should demonstrate that such is not the case. In fact, Athabaskan languages are very complex both in terms of structure and in terms of the range of their vocabulary.

In this section we will discuss some of the ways in which Athabaskan languages differ from English. In some of these areas, such as word order, the languages are equally complex, but in others one is more complex than the other.

Word order

In an English sentence the subject precedes the verb, which in turn precedes the direct object; for example, "John (subject) sees (verb) Mary (direct object)." In Athabaskan languages, the verb is usually the last element in the sentence, with the object between subject and verb, as in this example from Upper Tanana: "John (subject) Mary (direct object) uneh'ih (verb)," 'John sees Mary.' This is the feature that Athabaskans refer to when they try to explain their language to outsiders by saying, "We say things backwards." Despite the marked difference between English and Athabaskan word order, Athabaskan speakers rarely have difficulty mastering normal English word order when they learn that language.

Athabaskan verbs

Athabaskan verbs are generally much more intricate in structure than English verbs. This is partly because Athabaskan, like German, Russian, or Latin, is more *highly inflected* than English; that is, there are many more specific grammatical morphemes (prefixes and suffixes in Athabaskan, suffixes in European languages) that express ideas like person and number. Athabaskan verbs often include, in addition, information that English expresses with adverbs and auxiliary verbs. As a result, an entire English sentence can sometimes be translated by a single verb in Athabaskan. For example, the four-word sentence "You made me cry" is translated by one Koyukon word, "Sagheenłtsaah." In this word, the prefix *sa-* means "me (direct object)," *ghee-* indicates past tense, *n-* expresses the subject "you (singular)," *ł* expresses the idea of causality, and *-tsaah* is the verb stem meaning "to cry."

One of the areas of special expressive ability in Athabaskan languages is the so-called *classificatory verb system*, in which different verb stems are used depending on the physical characteristics of the subject or object. Thus, different stems express ideas like handling, throwing, or lying in place, depending on the shape, number, or condition of what is described. In Koyukon, the classes of objects (handled, thrown, and so on) or subjects (lying, sitting, or moving) include compact objects (e.g. hat, bead, bucket, book); flat, rigid, or stick-like objects (plate, cane, boat, snowshoe); objects in open containers (coffee in a cup, food in a bowl); multiple objects (hats, plates, dogs); bags and enclosed objects; flat, flexible, or cloth-like objects (fabric, skins, paper); food; burning objects; disorderly or scattered objects; mushy, wet, and messy objects; and granular or powdery substances.

The classificatory stem one chooses to use with a noun tells something about the state of that noun. Many nouns can take a variety of classificatory verbs depending on the condition they are in. For example, compare the following Koyukon examples, all with the subject *saahal* 'sugar':

saahal la' onh 'a single sugar cube is there' (compact object)
saahal lidlo 'cubes or bags of sugar are there' (multiple objects)
saahal lakkonh 'a bowl of sugar is there' (object in container)
saahal daal' onh 'a package of sugar is there' (enclosed object)
saahal daaltonh 'a box of sugar is there' (rigid object)
saahal alidzok 'sugar cubes are scattered around' (scattered objects)
saahal alitłaakk 'wet, sticky sugar is there (as at the bottom of a cup)' (wet object)
saahal daałinokk 'loose granulated sugar is there' (granular substance)

The usual way to describe a person's position is with verbs which mean literally 'stand' and 'sit,' but classificatory verbs can be used instead to say something vivid or comical about a person. Thus a baby bundled in blankets might be described with the verb for compact objects; a person who has just overeaten with the verb for bags; or a lazy, clumsy, sloppy, or drunk person with the verb for mushy, messy objects.

Tense vs. aspect

A speaker of general American standard English listening to a speaker of Athabaskan-influenced English will notice that people who speak that way sometimes use the present tense where standard English would have the past, or vice versa. Village students often mix tenses freely in their written work. This can probably be traced to a difference in grammar between English and Athabaskan. English tenses are basically past, present, and future. Athabaskan also has a future, but instead of past and present, it classifies actions or events into completed *(perfective)* and uncompleted *(imperfective)*. Most perfective verbs can readily be translated into English simple past, past perfect, or past progressive forms. Imperfective verbs, on the other hand, translate into either past or present English verbs depending on their context. Here is an example, in Koyukon:

Kk'odon ałyoł dahoon neeyo. 'Yesterday when it was snowing, he came.'

Kk'odon gheełyoł dahoon neeyo. 'Yesterday when it had snowed, he came.'

These sentences are exactly the same except for the verb referring to snowing. In the first sentence, *ałyoł* is imperfective, 'it was snowing (but hadn't stopped)'; in the second, *gheełyoł* is perfective, 'it snowed (and stopped), it had snowed.' The verb *neeyo* is perfective. Notice that English expresses aspectual differences by using adverbs and auxiliaries, while Athabaskan distinguishes aspect by different verb forms and tense by context and adverbs. These rules seem to be especially hard for non-speakers of standard English to master.

Plurality

One of the basic features of English grammar is that most nouns have special plural forms, sometimes regular (formed by adding *s*, as in "cats") and sometimes irregular (as in "geese," "cattle," or "men"). In Athabaskan, however, very few nouns have special plural forms. Instead, plurality is either inferred from the context or expressed by the choice of verb. For example, in Tanaina, 'He made it (one thing)' is *yiłchin* and 'he made them (several things)' is *yeghighun*, the verb stems being *-chin* and *-ghun*. This occurs with intransitive verbs, too; for example, in Upper Kuskokwim we have the forms *ghiyoł* 'he (one person) is walking along' and *hodił* 'they (several people) are walking along.' When it is necessary to express plurality without a special verb stem, or merely to emphasize plurality, adjectival words can be used; in Kutchin, for example, *ɬąįį di'įį* means 'he has a dog' but *ɬaii kwaii di'įį* means 'he has (several, quite a few) dogs.' Sometimes speakers of Athabaskan-influenced English fail to form plurals or use the plural irregularly.

Gender

Some languages ascribe gender (male, female, and neuter) to certain parts of speech. Many European languages classify all nouns this way. English has gender only in the third person singular pronouns, he/him/his, she/her/hers, and it/its. Athabaskan languages do not distinguish gender in their pronouns. For example, the Deg Hit'an word *itrix* can mean either 'he is crying,' 'she is crying,' or 'it is crying.' (Eskimo languages too lack gender distinctions.) This may be the reason speakers of Athabaskan-influenced English sometimes confuse genders, saying for instance, "I called my mother and he answered."

Sound systems

The sound systems of Athabaskan languages are characterized in general by a greater number of consonants than English has. Athabaskan languages have an average of 40 consonants (with as many as 49 in Deg Hit'an), compared to 24 in English. All Athabaskan languages have a series of glottalized stop consonants, i.e., sounds produced by closing off the flow of breath accompanied by a sharp release of glottal pressure. The consonants so produced sound like they have a slight "popping" sound after them. They are written as consonant plus apostrophe, e.g. *k'*, *t'*. These consonants may be difficult for English speakers learning Athabaskan to pronounce. Other unfamiliar sounds in Athabaskan include the voiceless *l*, written *ł* and pronounced like English *l* but without vibrating the vocal cords. Some Athabaskan languages have a back velar series of consonants including *q*, similar to *k* but pronounced farther back in the mouth, and *gg* (phonetically ɢ), similar to *g* but also farther back. Five Alaskan languages—Deg Hit'an, Upper Kuskokwim, Tanana, Han, and Kutchin—have a retroflex series of consonants with *r*-like quality, written in the practical spelling systems *(orthographies)* as *dr*, *tr*, *tr'*, *sr*, *zr*. Tables of the consonant and vowel inventories of all Alaskan Athabaskan languages appear at the end of this booklet. The table below depicts the consonant inventory of Deg Hit'an, the most exten-

sive in Alaskan Athabaskan, and will give you a good idea of the sounds that may be encountered in these languages. The table is arranged according to manner of articulation, that is, how the sound is produced (horizontal columns) and what part of the mouth is used to produce it (vertical columns).

DEG HIT'AN SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*retro-flex*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*back velar*	*glottal*
Stops										
plain		d	ddh	dl	dz	dr	j	g	gg	'
aspirated		t	tth	tl	ts	tr	ch	k	q	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tl'	ts'	tr'	ch'	k'	q'	
Fricatives										
voiceless			th	ł	s	sr	sh	yh	x	h
voiced	v		dh	l	z	zr		y	gh	
Nasals										
voiceless		nh						ngh		
voiced	m	n						ng		

The vowels of Athabaskan languages should present no difficulties for an English speaker. A language may have as few as four vowels (Tanaina) or as many as ten (Ahtna); the vowels may be either long, sometimes written double, or short. The vowel sounds vary from language to language, but those below, from Tanana, are typical:

Tanana Vowels

long	ee		a	o	oo
short		e		u	

These vowels have the following sounds in Tanana: *ee* as in English 'feet'; *a* as in English 'bad'; *o* as in English 'off'; *oo* as in English 'boot'; *e* like *i* in English 'bit' or *a* in English 'above'; *u* as in English 'put'.

Two vowel features found in some Athabaskan languages are not found in English. Five Alaskan languages—Kutchin, Han, Tanacross, Upper Tanana, and Tanana—have tone, a meaningful variation in the pitch of the syllable. A raised or lowered pitch on certain syllables makes a difference in the meaning of words; for example, in Kutchin, *shih* means 'brown bear' but *ṣhih* (with lowered tone) means 'food', and these words are not grammatically or etymologically related. The other vowel feature is nasalization, which occurs in Kutchin, Han, Tanacross, and Upper Tanana. Nasalized vowels sound like the combination vowel plus *n* in French and are written with a hook below the appropriate vowel. This, too, is a feature which makes a difference in the meanings of words; in Kutchin, for example, *gyuu* with plain vowel means 'fish scale' but *gyu̧u̧* with nasalized vowel means 'worm'.

It has often been suggested that the pronunciation of Athabaskan-influenced English is determined by the sound patterns of Athabaskan. In some cases this is probably true. For example, certain word-final consonant clusters do not occur in Koyukon, and Koyukon people speaking English tend to eliminate such clusters there too, saying, for example, "lan" for "land" and "sol" for "sold." On the other hand, there are features of this variety of English that seem to occur independently of Athabaskan influence. For example, in the Koyukon area English *th* as in "this" tends to be realized like *d*, and Koyukon in fact has no *th* sound; but Kutchin does have a *th* sound, and Kutchin speakers too tend to use a *d*-like consonant in place of English *th*. Many cases like the latter suggest that the Athabaskan English "accent" is regional rather than entirely based on the local Athabaskan language's sound inventory.

Cultural patterns of communication

We have discussed two areas everyone associates with language study—grammar and pronunciation. We now move to a third which may not occur so readily, the study of communicative behavior or sociolinguistics. To communicate across cultural boundaries, people do have to learn each other's vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. But even when this is accomplished, other factors may block communication, including different means of nonverbal communication and different cultural viewpoints about the proper use of language in various contexts.

When speakers of one language transfer grammatical patterns from their first language to their second, the result can be confusing. This confusion may extend beyond mere content. For example, one of the grammatical forms of the Athabaskan verb is called the *optative*. Typically translated with the auxiliary verb 'should,' it is something like the subjunctive in Latin and is used to express hopes and possibilities. It is also used in forming polite requests. There are three ways to express imperatives in Athabaskan, as these examples from Koyukon show:

> *Yah leedo*. 'You are staying in the house' or 'Stay in the house.'
> *Yah tagheedo'*. 'You will stay in the house' or 'Stay in the house.'
> *Yah ghoodo'*. 'You should stay in the house' or 'Please stay in the house.'

The first form, the imperfective, is used to ask someone to do something at the present time. The future is used to ask someone to do something in the future. The optative also requests future action but is more tentative and polite. When this pattern is directly transferred into English with the arbitrary translation 'should' it does not necessarily seem polite to a speaker of standard English, who probably interprets 'should' as a command unmitigated by politeness. Actually, the standard English form corresponding to the optative imperative above is 'Why don't you stay in the house?' To Athabaskans, however, direct questions are not a polite form. The indirection and tentativeness necessary for politeness are expressed by different constructions in the different languages.

We do not have much systematic information about nonverbal communication among Athabaskans. It is well known, however, that people from different cultures can misunderstand or offend each other by misinterpreting or ignoring nonverbal communicative behavior. For example, most Alaskan Native people can express an affirmative answer by raising the eyebrows. A White person who asked a question and did not notice this kind of answer might be offended, thinking that her question had been ignored. Again, many Athabaskans express wonder or affirmation by widening their eyes, an expressive pattern that may pass unnoticed by Whites.

A third area of misunderstanding is that of patterns of language use—when to talk, how much to say, and how to say it. On this topic, we recommend Ron and Suzanne Scollon's booklet *Interethnic Communication* and the videotape made to accompany it (available through the Alaska Native Language Center).

One very common problem in the classroom relates to what mainstream American culture calls "putting your best foot forward." Teachers expect students to express their good qualities and abilities by actively demonstrating them, perhaps feeling this is a way to build self-confidence. Many other White American institutions expect the same kind of display—interviews, business, and social gatherings.

Athabaskans often remark on how difficult it is for them to conform to such expectations by referring to their own good qualities in front of other people. They consider such behavior socially offensive, even when the accomplishments or talents to be displayed are really quite remarkable. It is considered far more admirable to be self-effacing and let others discover one's value for themselves. If a well-meaning teacher asks students to discuss their own achievements and talents, then, she may actually be asking students to display what their culture considers foolish and obnoxious behavior.

Another characteristic mainstream American society approves of is planning for the future, which is considered appropriate and even necessary. The more detailed one's plans, the better, and discussing such plans is a common topic of casual conversation. The last point is where the difference

in cultures lies. It is wrong to say that Athabaskans do not plan for the future, for they certainly do. What they consider objectionable is explicitly describing their plans to others. It is considered presumptuous to imply that one can predict the future. When teachers ask Athabaskan students to discuss in detail their plans for education and careers, then, they are putting them in a very uncomfortable spot by demanding socially unacceptable behavior.

Another differing pattern in the two cultures has to do with what sociolinguists call "leave-taking." After a conversation, White people make a series of remarks that formally close the encounter, such as "Well, I should be going now" and "It's been good talking with you"; they then exchange words like "goodbye." The Athabaskan pattern is somewhat different. There is no obligation to make closing comments or say "goodbye"; in fact, most Athabaskan languages have no word for "goodbye." White people sometimes observe that Athabaskans break off conversations "without warning" and may feel offended by this, not realizing that no impoliteness was meant. Athabaskans, on the other hand, may be puzzled or annoyed by the lengthy and seemingly pointless closing routine of White leave-taking.

We should make one important point here. We are talking about misunderstandings and cultural stereotyping that can occur because of differing communicative patterns. We ourselves would be guilty of stereotyping Athabaskans if we claimed that they all behaved the same way or had the same opinions and values. Societies are made up of individuals, not of abstractions like patterns and structures. Booklets like this one and *Interethnic Communication* can help by making us aware of *possible* patterns, concepts, and interpretations that we might not otherwise think of, but we must not think that *every* Athabaskan or *every* White person follows the general patterns outlined in these works.

Another thing we must point out is that because so much of White culture has come into rural Alaska, Native people are probably more tolerant in cross-cultural situations than White people are. They understand that differences exist and expect non-Native people to behave differently from

themselves; they can often consciously adopt these behavioral patterns in appropriate contexts. It is not necessary that non-Native people change their own communicative patterns, but neither should they judge the people whose communities they enter based on their own cultural preconceptions.

The use of nonstandard English

Athabaskan and other Native people in Alaska generally speak dialects of English which are quite different from general American English, the kind of English taught in schools and used in national media. These dialects have been collectively called "Village English" or "Bush English." Throughout this presentation, we have tried to stress the need to be accepting and nonjudgmental toward different ways of learning, behaving, and communicating. The same principle holds true for Athabaskan-influenced English.

We have stressed the idea that all languages are functional means of communication. Local varieties of English are no exception. Historically, it is a combination of various influences from Eskimo and Athabaskan languages and the many dialects of English spoken by traders, missionaries, miners, and teachers. To date no one has determined how many local varieties of English exist in Alaska and what their systematic characteristics are, even though information of this nature is badly needed for educational planning. Therefore, all we will do here is to give a few common examples of differences between standard and local English and offer suggestions about teaching standard English in the classroom.

In the section on Athabaskan languages we mentioned that Athabaskan does not distinguish pronouns for gender. This is almost certainly the reason gender tends to be confused. Another feature of Athabaskan we identified as contributing to the local variety of English was the tense system. Yet another, not mentioned earlier, is the fact that Athabaskan has no words corresponding to the articles "a" and "the"; articles are sometimes omitted or used in nonstandard ways in the local varieties of English.

Some features of the English spoken in Athabaskan villages may actually have spread from Eskimo areas. For example, many Athabaskans use the phrase "that kind" as an all-purpose noun where standard English might have "that thing." The Central Yupik Eskimo word *imkuciq*, "thing, whatchamacallit," literally meaning something close to "that kind," may be the source of this phrase.

Still other expressions are probably derived from the nonstandard varieties of English that Alaskan Natives heard from people speaking other regional American dialects or varieties of English influenced by European languages. For instance, the use of "bum" for "bad" cannot be explained by anything in a Native language, but it does occur in some other American English dialects.

Other features of the English spoken in Athabaskan communities have probably developed quite independently of both the Native languages and standard and nonstandard English. The use of "never" for "didn't" (as in "I never broke that") cannot be explained as anything but an independent development. One source of such developments was undoubtedly the early schools' demand that parents with limited command of English speak it to their children in the home. Approximate but nonstandard forms were pressed into use and over the years became general in the local English.

RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

One principle needs to be kept firmly in mind when teaching language in the classroom: the function of language is communication. This means that language should seldom be abstracted from real communicative contexts. English should not be taught apart from its practical value and without being aware that different kinds of English are necessary in different situations. The same is true of teaching an Athabaskan language. Real communicative situations should be introduced into the classroom whenever possible.

Standard English instruction

Teachers sometimes make the mistake of being too insistent on their pupils using standard English in all situations, reasoning that because children need to know it, they must practice it constantly and eradicate whatever other dialect they speak. While it is true that they need the knowledge and the practice, it is wrong to assume that constant correction will teach them standard English; in fact, it may produce the opposite effect. There are at least two reasons for this. First, such an approach can make a student terribly self-conscious about using standard English and, as a result, less likely to try using it. Second, the corrective approach may be counterproductive because it abstracts language from its true function—communication. Interrupting functional communication to point out grammatical "errors" enhances neither the communication nor the speaker's perception of the standard language.

It is unrealistic to expect students (or anyone else) to use standard English in all situations. Trying to make students speak standard English to their parents and other members of their community can alienate the school from the community and the young people from their own society (if they

try to comply) or from mainstream society (if they realize the implications of the school's demands and rebel). It is of prime importance that the school be part of the community it serves and not perceived merely as an institution imposed from outside by an alien, dominant culture.

What, then, should the teacher's approach to standard English be? We are not suggesting that it should be neglected. In a more perfect world, perhaps the variety of language a person used would not matter; but in our world as it is, people who wish to succeed in American education, business, and politics must have good command of the standard or general American English dialect, at least in its written form. While it is not the school's duty to convince students that these are the *only* successes worth aiming for, it is the school's goal to prepare them for such a future if they wish it. It is apparent, then, that standard English must be taught by some means. The approach we suggest is the establishment of bidialectalism.

Different dialects need not be conflicting or mutually exclusive. All of us use different styles of speech in different settings—at home with our families, in our communities, at work with our colleagues, and in formal institutional settings. Especially for those whose families speak a nonstandard dialect, this style-switching may amount to dialect-switching. Even people who grow up speaking standard English at home often learn to switch into nonstandard dialects in order to be more easily accepted by playmates, co-workers, and so on. Similarly, it is reasonable to expect that Athabaskan students can use different styles of speech in different contexts.

With this attitude in mind, it is possible to teach students standard English in a nonconfrontational manner. They can learn the dialect without having their every statement corrected. First of all, the teacher himself should provide a good, consistent model of standard English. Sometimes people who come to an Alaskan village are so charmed by the local variety of English that, consciously or unconsciously, they adopt it themselves. Indeed, someone who has grown up bidialectal may have a hard time not doing

this. Remember, however, that you as the teacher are perhaps the best model available to your students and when in the classroom, always speak the language taught in the classroom. In addition, provide the students with many other examples of standard English, including well written books and audiovisual materials that feature interesting and appropriate use of standard English. The language in these models must be simple enough for the students' level, but it should always be well constructed.

This does not mean students should never be corrected. If you observe parents correcting their children's language, you can see how gentle and subtle such correction can be. If a child says, "Johnny falled me!" a parent is not likely to respond, "You should say, 'Johnny pushed me down.'" Instead, the parent will probably provide a model of the correct form that is also meaningful communication, such as, "Why did Johnny push you down?" or "Johnny, did you push her down?"

Rather than concentrating on the nonstandard form of the student's utterance, a teacher can incorporate the standard alternative into ongoing communication, providing a correction without making the student feel self-conscious. If the student says, "I never see it," the teacher can comment, "You didn't see it?" If the communicative situation permits digression, the teacher can point out the difference; for example, "People in this area say 'never' where most Americans say 'didn't'; 'never' means something a little different in standard English."

Remember the basic principle we stressed at the beginning of this chapter: language is used for communication. If you do not clearly understand what the student is saying to you, if you are not communicating, you should tell him or her this. If possible, students themselves should be encouraged to discuss situations where communication might be failing.

In written work, it should be carefully explained and specified what variety of English is to be used. No matter what variety of English a person speaks, unless he has read a good deal he is likely to be unaware of the somewhat different requirements of written standard English. For example, there is probably no dialect of spoken American English where one cannot use

the phrase "kind of" as in "it's kind of cold here." In written English, however, one should use the word "rather" to express the same idea. Teachers must be able to identify and explain points like this. The technical term which designates the variety of language used in a certain context is "register." Students should be introduced to the different registers necessary in the home, in spoken exchanges in the classroom, and in formal written work. Informal written work like fiction, verse, and personal letters, can be in the student's ordinary conversational register.

Letters can also be used as a way of helping the student become comfortable in standard English, especially since letter-writing is the most important use most people will make of that variety of the language in their adult life. Students can write to "pen pals" in other parts of the country, to businesses and government agencies for information, to local or regional newspapers, and to their representatives in the state or national government. Again, in this approach language is being used in real, productive communication.

Emphasizing human diversity

It is important to make the point to students that there are not just two ways of life in the world, Native and mainstream American. Teachers should talk about other cultures and ways of life that differ from either of those. Introducing materials used in the schools of other ethnic groups is fascinating and also shows that people everywhere are struggling to cope with intercultural problems in innovative ways.

Students should not be made to feel that they have to give up being Athabaskan to be part of the modern world. They should realize that not all the technological innovations they see are products of the dominant society but, rather, are the result of human invention all over the world.

The diversity of language should also be discussed. In particular, it should be emphasized that English has many dialects and that anyone who

speaks English speaks some dialect with quirks of its own. Audiovisual materials and books with samples of different varieties of English should be used. Teachers can explain that standard English is used so people of many different groups can communicate with each other easily. It must be admitted that the variety chosen as standard was chosen because it was the dialect of the dominant social and economic class; this is a usual process in the development of national languages and has occurred all over the world. It may be somehow unjust, but it is a fact of life.

We have said earlier that teachers should use instructional materials in good standard English. However, once students know that English has many varieties, there is no reason not to supplement standard-English materials with those in other dialects. They can even serve as the basis of discussion on those grounds. For example, the Yukon-Koyukuk School District has produced a series of "village biographies" that reproduce statements in the local variety of English. These books should not be avoided. They contain much valuable information, and using them demonstrates respect for the local culture and people.

We have not talked much about pronunciation in different dialects of English. In fact, differences in pronunciation, or different "accents," are considered interesting but unimportant by most English speakers. People with pronounced accents can succeed in standard-English-using institutions if their vocabulary and grammar are within the standard norm. For example, Henry Kissinger was our country's Secretary of State, even though his pronunciation was strongly influenced by German. We believe that Alaskan village teachers should not concern themselves much with the pronunciation patterns of their students, which are unlikely to interfere with spoken communication and which do not carry over at all in written communication. Nonstandard vocabulary and syntax, however, can interfere with understanding and carry over directly into writing, so these should be stressed in teaching standard English.

In summary, teachers should indeed be concerned with teaching their students standard English, but they should develop ways of doing this without trying to eradicate the students' first dialect. Much more needs to be known about local varieties of English before effective contrastive techniques can be developed. Until then, understanding the nature of linguistic diversity and discussing it honestly and nonjudgmentally in the classroom will go a long way toward enabling students to learn an alternative dialect while maintaining a positive attitude toward both their own speech and that of others.

Integrating Athabaskan studies into the curriculum

It is wrong to assume, as both teachers and community members sometimes do, that village schools must choose between teaching either Athabaskan or mainstream American subjects. One need not schedule all things Athabaskan during one time period and all other things during another. Instead, the entire curriculum should be integrated.

Many school groups have taken field trips to fish camp, gone berry-picking, or participated in other subsistence activities. Most teachers have found such trips to be a wonderful opportunity to combine the knowledge of the two cultures. From mainstream culture might come principles of biological science, and from Athabaskan the knowledge of habitats, seasonal patterns, and animal behavior. Trips can also incorporate language lessons, teaching plant and animal names or the verbs that describe cutting, scaling, and scoring fish. People from the community are often more comfortable telling old stories and talking about the old days during such excursions than they are in the classroom.

Students' comprehension and retention is also improved when subject matter is presented in a hands-on situation. If there is one thing mainstream Americans remember from high-school biology lab, it is dissecting frogs. In fish camp one has the opportunity for the same kind of active observation. When the fish are right there and are an important part of the community's

daily life, it is relevant and interesting to talk about migration or explain how gills work. When people are out picking berries, botany and nutrition take on new meaning.

In the city it is easy to forget that subject areas like geography and biology are about real things. In a village, one is constantly aware of the significance of the natural environment. People need to know geography and biology to get the necessities of life. In such a setting it should be easy for teachers to make classroom studies directly relevant to the lives of the students.

These ideas apply not only to science but to other subject areas. When discussing literature, one should be able to compare European-American with Athabaskan literature, using some of the newly produced materials (see Suggested Reading) that make it accessible to English speakers in forms that express its real values. During physical education, students can play traditional Native games (the Eskimo-Indian Olympics and the Native Youth Olympics should provide ideas). In social studies, local history, social structure, and government can be important topics. As always, the school should be part of the community and not an alienating influence.

Athabaskan language instruction

Many village schools have some kind of instructional program in the local Athabaskan language. Although often called "bilingual education," at the present time such classes teach Athabaskan as a second language, because there are only a very few communities in Alaska where children actually can converse fluently in an Athabaskan language. Such programs are usually conducted by a bilingual aide hired from the local community. Many of these aides have had little or no training in teaching methods or in Native-language literacy, and they may have little if any material for classroom use. They are often asked to design an instructional program entirely independently. Considering the lack of support they have had, many have done a remarkable job of teaching the language, but it is not fair to require them to work without help.

Some aides have had sound and helpful assistance. Sometimes this has come from an active and well informed bilingual/bicultural coordinator at the district office. In other cases an especially interested local teacher has been a great help. The ideal situation is support from all levels. District personnel should include a coordinator qualified and assigned to design and implement bilingual programs throughout the district. Teachers in the schools should be willing to help design local curricula and work with aides. In addition, statewide agencies such as the Department of Education, the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, the Alaska Native Language Center, and other Rural Education units of the University should be called upon to contribute their expertise.

Cooperative efforts can be very effective and students can enjoy and learn from well designed programs. It is important to realize, though, that schools alone cannot revive a language when it is passing out of use among younger generations.

The problem is that in most Alaskan Athabaskan areas, the native language is no longer the primary means of communication. In most villages, only people in late middle age and older use Athabaskan among themselves. Only if the native language is necessary in the community will it revive. For example, one Mohawk community in Canada was able to revive their dying language when everyone in the community agreed to speak nothing but Mohawk to children and followed the rule strictly. In Alaskan villages, partly because of the longstanding policies of the schools, people have tended to speak English to children for several generations.

Language can still be part of the community's culture without being used in everyday conversation. In some places the native language is used in the church or at traditional ceremonies, especially in songs. Often an otherwise "dead" language survives as a literary language; for example, there was an active tradition of writing poetry in Latin as late as the eighteenth century. Therefore people should not "give up" teaching the local Athabaskan language, even if it is very unlikely that it will ever be anyone's first language again. It can still be a strong force for cultural identity and

pride. In southeastern Alaska, for example, few if any children speak Tlingit any more, but there are a number of popular groups in which schoolchildren learn traditional songs and dances from elders.

As an outside institution, the school cannot and should not try to force study of the native language on the community; the community must take the initiative and make the decisions. An overly enthusiastic teacher who constantly tries to get people to speak the local language may in fact be gravely insulting them. The teacher may be perceived as saying, "You people need me to tell you how to be good Athabaskans," taunting people with what they have lost after his own society has taken it away. Remember that it was primarily the schools that forced people to give up their native languages in the first place.

An overly enthusiastic teacher can also hurt students by telling them that if they lose their language they will lose their culture too. First of all, such a statement is wrong. Culture is always changing, and its changes may include the adoption of different languages as well as technology and subsistence patterns. Second, such a statement implies that students (very few of whom speak Athabaskan) have already lost their culture and are not "real" Athabaskans. A student who gets this message can only wonder, "If I'm not Athabaskan and I'm not White, am I nothing at all?"

Rather than trying to shape the outlook and future of a community, a teacher should be sensitive to the needs and desires of the community and act to serve them. Rather than self-righteously trying to impose his own values, a teacher should cooperate with the rest of the community to give students the skills to be competent, capable, and productive members of both local and wider societies.

Some teachers may go to the other extreme and discourage teaching Athabaskan languages in the belief that Athabaskan studies take time away from more "important" subjects and interfere with learning standard English. Again, teachers must be sensitive to what the community wants in the curriculum. Furthermore, learning one language definitely does not interfere with learning another. Learning Athabaskan as a second language

is no more detrimental than learning French or Spanish as a second language.

As far as taking time away from teaching things needed for survival in the modern world, Athabaskan culture *is* part of the modern world. It has not been eliminated yet and pessimism about its continuation is neither productive nor justified. Athabaskan people are going to be around for a long time and their culture, despite its changing nature, will continue in some form. Besides, as pointed out above, Athabaskan studies can often be integrated into more general subject areas, where their immediate relevance will catch students' attention and hold it.

Teaching literacy in Athabaskan

In general, we believe that reading ability in an Athabaskan language is not something that should be emphasized in the early stages of an instructional program. This is based on the fact that so few Athabaskan children speak anything but English. Before a child learns to write Athabaskan (or indeed any other language) he or she should first command the language's sound system and have some basic conversational skills.

On the other hand, writing should not be completely avoided nor should children be prevented from seeing Athabaskan written. If a teacher trained in literacy is available, writing can and should be introduced in accordance with the interest and ability of the child. Children who want to know how to spell something should be shown.

A child should be able to say a word or phrase before seeing it in writing. For example, if a child asks how to write the word for "raven" you should ask him or her how to say it in the local language and write it after

receiving an answer. If the student does not know the word, teach it orally first and then write it down when it is mastered.

Some bilingual teachers in Alaska have observed that it is easy to teach writing. Students who can already write English pick it up quickly. The problem is that students cannot remember the words they learn merely by seeing and writing them. We cannot emphasize too strongly that speaking ability and the use of words *in context* should be primary and literacy secondary.

Where students already speak the language, and in adult-education programs, literacy can be taught earlier in the program, just as English literacy is taught. The modern writing systems of Alaskan Athabaskan languages have all been designed to resemble the writing system of English in many ways and all use the ordinary Roman alphabet with a few necessary modifications.

One source of difficulty is that because Athabaskan languages have more consonant sounds than English does, combinations of letters (digraphs with two characters, trigraphs with three) have to be used to represent some sounds. Of course, English has such conventions too in combinations like *th, ch, sh, ng*. Athabaskan spelling systems add a few more, some of them quite long, like *tth'* (a sound made with the tongue between the teeth and followed by a glottal "pop").

At the end of this book are tables of the writing systems or *orthographies* for all the Athabaskan languages of Alaska. An explanation of some of the basic principles of Athabaskan orthographies and sound systems introduces the tables.

APPENDIX 1

ATHABASKAN SOUND SYSTEMS

Consonants

In the tables which follow, the consonants are arranged according to two factors: place of articulation and manner of articulation. The manners of articulation into which consonants are divided are *plain, aspirated and glottalized stops, voiced and voiceless fricatives, nasals,* and *sonorants*. Below is an explanation of each of these, with references to the Athabaskan sounds typical of each group.

Manners of articulation:

Plain stops: Plain stops are consonants which are produced by completely blocking the stream of air in the mouth. These sounds in Athabaskan are similar to their orthographical counterparts in English (e.g., *d, g*) but they are not voiced; that is, they are pronounced without vibrating the vocal cords as is done when pronouncing the similar English sounds. Athabaskan *d* is similar to the *t* in the English word *stop*, and Athabaskan *g* is similar to the *k* in English *skip*. Typical plain stops are *b, d, dl, ddh, dz, g,* and *gg*.

Aspirated stops: Aspirated stops are also consonants that are produced with complete blockage of the stream of air in the mouth, but they are accompanied by a slight puff or release of air. They correspond fairly closely to their orthographical counterparts in English. Typical aspirated stops are *t, tth, tl, ts, k,* and *q*.

Glottalized stops: Glottalized stops have no counterparts in English. Basically, they are produced in the following way: the air stream is blocked in both the mouth and the glottis ("voice box"), and then released. The effect is a slight popping sound after the consonant. Glottalized consonants are written by using the characters for the corresponding aspirated stops, showing the glottalization with an apostrophe following the letter or combination of letters, e.g., *t', tth', tl', ts', k', q'*.

Voiceless fricatives: Fricatives are consonants that are produced by blocking the air stream in the mouth only partially. Some English voiceless fricatives are *s*, *sh*, and "soft" *th* as in *think*. Typical Athabaskan voiceless fricatives are *s*, *ł*, *th*, *sh*, *vh*, and *x*.

Voiced fricatives: Voiced fricatives are pronounced with partial blockage of the air stream and with vibration of the vocal cords. Typical Athabaskan voiced fricatives are *z*, *l*, *dh*, *y*, and *gh*.

Nasals: Nasals are sounds which are pronounced with the air stream blocked in the mouth but passing through the nose, as in English *n* and *m*. Athabaskan nasals include the voiced nasals *n*, *m*, and *ng* (the last in Deg Hit'an only) and the voiceless nasals *nh* (written *n̨* in some systems) and *ngh* (Deg Hit'an only).

Sonorants: Sometimes nasals and the voiced fricatives or semivowels *w*, *y*, and *r* are grouped separately in a category called "sonorants."

Place of Articulation

The following categories classify sounds according to what parts of the mouth are employed in producing them.

Labial: Labial sounds are made with the lips, either by bringing the lips together to block the flow of air or by touching the lip to the teeth. Labial sounds include *m*, *b*, *v*, *f*, and *w*.

Tip alveolar: Tip alveolar sounds are produced with the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge, the area just behind the upper front teeth. Generally, Athabaskan languages have three alveolar sounds: *d*, *t*, and *t'* (plain, aspirated, and glottalized).

Interdental: Interdental sounds are pronounced with the tongue touching the teeth (as in English *th* sounds). Typical Athabaskan interdental sounds are *ddh*, *tth*, *tth'* (plain, aspirated, and glottalized stops) and *th* and *dh* (voiceless and voiced fricatives).

Lateral: Lateral sounds are *l*-like sounds where the air stream moves along the sides of the mouth. Except for the voiced continuant *l*, these sounds have no real counterparts in English. The Athabaskan lateral consonants are *dl*, *tl*, *tl'*, *l*, and *ł*.

Blade alveolar: Blade alveolar sounds are pronounced with the blade of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth just behind the front teeth. Typical Athabaskan blade alveolar sounds are *dz* (plain stop), *ts* (aspirated stop), *ts'* (glottalized stop), *s* and *z*.

Retroflex: Retroflex sounds are produced with the tongue curled slightly back, as in English *r*. Athabaskan retroflex sounds are *r*, *dr*, *tr*, *tr'*, *sr*, and *zr*.

Alveo-palatal: Alveo-palatal sounds are produced with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth near the center. They include *j*, *ch*, *ch'*, *sh*, and *zh*.

Velar: Velar sounds are produced with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth behind the center. English *g* and *k* are velar sounds. Athabaskan languages also have glottalized velars, giving the system *g*, *k*, and *k'*. *In Athabaskan languages the sound y* is usually considered part of the velar fricative column and has a voiceless counterpart *yh*.

Back velar or uvular: Back velar sounds are produced with the back of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth far back near the uvula. English has no such sounds. The Athabaskan back velar system includes *gg*, *q*, *q'*, *x*, and *gh* (*x* is similar to German *ch* and *gh* is similar to French *r*). Different orthographies treat these sounds somewhat differently: *q* is written kk *in Koyukon and k* in Ahtna (in Ahtna *k* is written *c*).

Glottal: There are just two sounds which are produced entirely by air blockage in the glottis: *h* (same as English *h*) and the glottal stop, written '. When the glottal stop is pronounced, the air stream is completely blocked, so that it sounds like a "catch" in the breath.

Vowels

The vowels of the Athabaskan languages are also arranged in charts in the following pages. The vowels of most languages are divided into two groups, full and reduced. The reduced vowels are shorter in duration and more lax than the full vowels.

The vowel charts are arranged according to where the tongue is when a particular vowel is pronounced. For example, when someone speaking Tanaina says the vowel *i* the tongue is in a high, front position relative to the rest of the vowels; *a* is low and central; and *u* is high and back.

Some languages also have a long/short distinction among vowels. Long vowels are longer in duration than corresponding short ones but are similar or identical in all other features. Lengthening of a vowel sound is usually represented in practical orthographies by doubling the vowel character. In the following tables, the long vowels are separated from the short ones with a slash; for example, Upper Tanana has both a long and a short high front vowel, shown on the table as *ii/i*.

AHTNA SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*velar*	*back velar*	*glottal*
Stops							
plain	b	d	dl	dz	g	gg	'
aspirated		t	tl	ts	c	k	
glottalized		t'	tl'	ts'	c'	k'	
Fricatives							
voiceless	hw		ł	s	yh	x	h
voiced	w		l	z	y	gh	
Nasals							
voiced	m	n			ng		

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
high	ii/i		uu/u
mid	ae/e		oo/o
low		aa/a	

TANAINA SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*back velar*	*glottal*
Stops								
plain	b	d	dl	dz	j	g	gg	'
aspirated		t	tl	ts	ch	k	q	
glottalized		t'	tl'	ts'	ch'	k'	q'	
Fricatives								
voiceless			ɬ	s	sh	x	h	hh
voiced	v		l	z	zh	y	gh	
Nasals								
voiced	m	n'						

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
high	i		u
low		a	
reduced		e	

1. In the Upper Inlet dialect the alveo-palatal series is not pronounced but is merged with the blade alveolar series.
2. *v* is pronounced as a glide, *w*, in Seldovia dialect.

DEG HIT'AN SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*retro-flex*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*back velar*	*glottal*
Stops										
plain		d	ddh	dl	dz	dr	j	g	gg	'
aspirated		t	tth	tl	ts	tr	ch	k	q	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tl'	ts'	tr'	ch'	k'	q'	
Fricatives										
voiceless			th	ł	s	sr	sh	yh	x	h
voiced	v		dh	l	z	zr		y	gh	
Nasals										
voiceless		nh						ngh		
voiced	m	n						ng		

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
mid	e		o
low		a	
reduced			
	i		u

HOLIKACHUK SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*velar*	*back velar*	*glottal*
Stops								
plain		d	ddh	dl	dz	g	gg	'
aspirated		t	tth	tl	ts	k	q	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tl'	ts'	k'	q'	
Fricatives								
voiceless			th	ɬ	s	yh	x	
voiced			dh	l	z	y	gh	
Nasals								
voiceless		nh						
voiced	m	n				ng		

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
mid	e		oo
low		a	o
reduced	i		u

KOYUKON SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*[1]	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*alveo-palatal*[1]	*velar*	*back velar*	*glottal*
Stops								
plain	b	d	dl	dz	j	g	gg	'
aspirated		t	tł	ts	ch	k	kk	
glottalized		t'	tł'	ts'	ch'	k'	kk'	
Fricatives								
voiceless			ł	s	sh	yh	h	h'
voiced			l	z		y	gh	
Nasals								
voiceless		nh						
voiced	m[3]	n						

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
high	ee		oo
low	aa		o
reduced			
high	i[4]		u
low		a[4]	

Notes:

1. The palatal series occurs only in the Upper dialect, where these sounds replace the Lower and Central front velar series (except for *y* which remains in Upper).
2. Two different sounds are both symbolized by *h* in the practical orthography. The glottal *h* was formerly written *h*.
3. *M* occurs only in the Lower dialect; it is replaced by *b* in Central and Upper.
4. The vowels *i* and *a* are the same phoneme. Orthographical convention determines that *a* is used at the beginning or end of a word or next to a back velar or glottalized consonant; *i* is used elsewhere. In general *i* is phonetically [I] and *a* is [ə].

UPPER KUSKOKWIM SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*retro-flex*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*glottal*
Stops								
plain		d	dl	dz	dr	j	g	'
aspirated		t	tł	ts	tr	ch	k	
glottalized		t'	tł'	ts'	tr'	ch'	k'	
Fricatives								
voiceless			ł	s	sr	sh	h	
voiced			l	z	zr	y	gh	
Nasals								
voiceless		n						
voiced	m	n						

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
high	e		u
low	a		o
reduced	i		w

TANANA SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*retro-flex*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*glottal*
Stops									
plain	b	d	ddh	dl	dz	dr	j	g	'
aspirated		t	tth	tł	ts	tr	ch	k	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tł'	ts'	tr'	ch'	k'	
Fricatives									
voiceless			th	ł	s	sr	y[1]	kh	h
voiced			dh	l	z	zr	y	gh	
Nasals									
voiceless		n[2]							
voiced	m	n[3]							

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
high	ee		oo
low	a		o
reduced	e		u

Notes:

1. Syllable-final *y* is voiceless; syllable-initial *y* is voiced.
2. Syllable-final *n* is voiceless unless followed by glottal stop.
3. *N* is voiced when syllable-initial or followed by glottal stop.

TANACROSS SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*glottal*[1]
Stops								
plain[2]		d	ddh	dl	dz	j	g	'
aspirated		t	tth	tɬ	ts	ch	k	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tɬ'	ts'	ch'	k'	
Fricatives								
voiceless			th	ɬ	s	sh/yh[3]	x	
semivoiced					s	sh		
voiced			dh	l	z	y	gh	
Nasals								
voiceless		nh						
voiced	m	n						

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
full			
high	ii/i		uu/u
low	ee/e	aa/a	oo/o

Nasalization: ˛
High Tone: ˊ

1. All syllable-final voiced consonants may be followed by ' (glottalization).
2. Plain stops are voiced syllable-finally.
3. *sh* occurs only syllable-initially; *nh* and *yh* occur only syllable-finally (their heavy counterparts are *nn* and *yy*).

UPPER TANANA SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*glottal*
Stops								
plain	b	d	dh	dl	dz	j	g	'
aspirated		t	th	tl	ts	ch	k	
glottalized		t'	th'	tl'	ts'	ch'	k'	
Fricatives								
voiceless			th	ł	s	sh	x	h
voiced			dh	l		shy		
Sonorants[1]								
voiceless		nh				ih		
voiced	m	n/nn				i/iy		

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back round*	*back non-round*
high	ii/i		uu/u	uu/u
mid	ee/e		oo/o	a
low		aa/a		

1. Consonants which occur syllable-finally are light/heavy: nh/nn, ih/iy, t/dn, l/l, k/gn, h/0. The heavy syllable-final consonants may be followed by ' (glottal stop); also n', i' occur syllable-finally.

KUTCHIN SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants[1]

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*retro-flex*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*glottal*
Stops									
plain		d	ddh	dl	dz	dr	j	g	'
aspirated		t	tth	tl	ts	tr	ch	k	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tl'	ts'	tr'	ch'	k'	
Fricatives									
voiceless			th	ɬ	s	shr	sh	kh	h
voiced	v		dh	ɮ	z	zhr	zh	gh	
Sonorants									
voiceless			nh		rh				
voiced	m		n,nd		r	y	nj		

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
high	ii/i		uu/u
mid	ee/e		oo/o
low		aa/a	

Nasalization: V̨

Tone (not represented in practical orthography): low V̀, falling V̂, half-low V̌.

Notes:

1. Consonants of all series except interdentals may be followed by *y*; velars may be followed by *w*. The *w* and *y* sounds are actually most closely associated with the following vowel nucleus, but the practical orthography of Kutchin treats them as being attached to the consonant, writing, for example, *tly'* rather than the phonologically more accurate *tl'y*. Consonants which occur syllable-finally are n, nh, t, l, ł, ɬ, rh, k, ', h.

HAN SOUND SYSTEM

Consonants

	labial	*tip alveolar*	*inter-dental*	*lateral*	*blade alveolar*	*retro-flex*	*alveo-palatal*	*velar*	*glottal*
Stops									
plain	b	d	ddh	dl	dz	dr	j	g	'
aspirated		t	tth	tl	ts	tr	ch	k	
glottalized		t'	tth'	tl'	ts'	tr'	ch'	k'	
Fricatives									
voiceless	hw		th	l	s	sr	sh	kh	h
voiced			dh	l	z	zr	zh	gh	
Sonorants'									
oral	w			l		r	y		
nasal	m	n							

Vowels

	front	*central*	*back*
Full			
high	ii/i		uu/u
mid	ee/e	öö/ö	oo/o
low	aa/a		ää/ä
Reduced			
mid		ë	

Nasalization: V

Tone: low V̌, falling V̂, rising V̌.

Notes:

1. Consonants which occur syllable-finally are (light/heavy): n, ng, w, t, l, r, y, k, ', h. Of these, *n, w, l, r, y* can be doubled and *n* and *y* can be followed by '.

SELECTED RESOURCES

General Works on Athabaskan Languages

Krauss, Michael E. 1980. *Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present, and Future*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, Research Paper Number 4. 110 pp. [Written for the general reader and for undergraduate courses; surveys the distribution and relationships of Native languages, their history since European contact, development of literacy and education in them, their present status and possible futures. *Highly recommended.*]

Krauss, Michael E. 1982. *Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. [Full-color wall map with populations, territories, and language status.]

Krauss, Michael E. and Mary Jane McGary. 1980. *Alaska Native Languages: A Bibliographical Catalogue. Part One: Indian Languages*. Fairbanks. Alaska Native Language Center, Research Paper Number 3. 455 pp. [Lists and describes in detail virtually all published and unpublished written materials on Alaskan Indian languages through 1980, including educational publications.]

Scollon, Ron and Suzanne Scollon. 1979. *Interethnic Communication*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. [Discussion for the general reader of problems and solutions, especially in Athabaskan-White communication.]

Thompson, Chad, Melissa Axelrod, and Eliza Jones. 1983. *Koyukon Language Scope and Sequence* (265 pp.); *Koyukon Language Curriculum Student Workbook* (158 pp.); *Koyukon Language Curriculum Lesson Plans* (89 pp.). Nenana: Yukon-Koyukuk School District. [First of a series of coordinated materials presenting the teaching of Koyukon Athabaskan as a second language for different grade levels. The *Scope and Sequence* describes much of the grammar of Koyukon in terms understandable to the informed general reader. This work and similar materials now being developed should serve as models for curriculum development in other Alaskan Athabaskan languages as well.]

Works on Athabaskan Culture

Frank, Ellen. 1983. *K'okhethdeno De'on: Moving Around in the Old Days*. Fairbanks. Alaska Native Language Center. 40 pp. [Traditional subsistence cycle of the Minto Tanana people; bilingual in Tanana and English, with explanation of Tanana spelling system.]

Helm, June, editor. 1981. *Subarctic*. Volume 6, *Handbook of North American Indians*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution. 853 pp. [An indispensable reference on Alaskan and Canadian Athabaskans and other American Indian groups, including articles on language, prehistory, and various aspects of culture. Every Alaskan school should have a copy of this work.]

Kari, James, Priscilla Russell Kari and Jane McGary. 1982. *Dena'ina Elnena: Tanaina Country*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 111 pp. [Geography and natural history of the Tanaina Athabaskan territory around Cook Inlet, concentrating on Native use of resources; in English with large Tanaina glossary and place-name lists.]

MacAlpine, Donna. 1980. *A Woman of Anvik*. McGrath: Iditarod Area School District. 130 pp. [History, language, and culture of the Deg Hit'an (Ingalik) Athabaskans, prepared for school use.]

Nelson, Richard K. 1973. *Hunters of the Northern Forest: Designs for Survival among the Alaskan Kutchin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 339 pp. [A lively and fascinating account of modern Athabaskan culture and subsistence techniques in northeastern Alaska.]

Nelson, Richard K. 1983. *The Athabaskans: People of the Boreal Forest*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Museum. 67 pp. [Introductory book for the general reader and high-school student, with many illustrations; study guide available.]

Nelson, Richard K. 1983. *Make Prayers to the Raven: A Koyukon View of the Northern Forest*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [A detailed, excellent work on the modern culture of the Koyukon Athabaskans, done in collaboration with many local experts.]

Simeone, William E. 1982. *A History of Alaskan Athapaskans*. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission. 133 pp. [A brief but useful general survey of important events and changes among Alaskan Athabaskans since European contact.]

VanStone, James W. 1974. *Athapaskan Adaptations: Hunters and Fishermen of the Subarctic Forests*. Arlington Heights, Ill.: AHM Publishing. 145 pp. [Surveys the traditional cultures of Alaskan and Canadian Athabaskan peoples, with some comments on modern developments. A good introductory text.]

Songs

Solomon, Madeline and Eliza Jones. 1978. *Koyukon Athabaskan Dance Songs*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center. 45 pp. [19 songs with musical transcriptions and background information.]

Riddles

Dauenhauer, Richard. 1976. *Riddle and Poetry Handbook*. Anchorage. Alaska Native Education Board. [General discussions of riddles and poetry with examples from world traditions; written for teachers. Out of print but should be made more generally available.]

Henry, Chief. 1976. *K'ooltsaah Ts'in'. Koyukon Riddles*. Fairbanks. Alaska Native Language Center. 65 pp. [28 Koyukon riddles with translations, and introduction.]

Jetté, Jules. 1913. "Riddles of the Ten'a Indians." *Anthropos* 8:181-201. [110 Koyukon riddles with translations and notes; discussion of Koyukon riddling.]

Jones, Eliza. March 1983. Interview with Karen McPherson for KUAC-FM series *Chinook*. Audio cassette available from University of Alaska Fairbanks, Archives-Oral History Project. [Discussion of Koyukon riddles.]

Wassillie, Albert, Sr. 1980. *K'ich'igi: Dena'ina Riddles*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center. [36 Tanaina riddles with translations.]

Personal Narratives

Carlo, Poldine. n.d. *Nulato, an Indian Life on the Yukon*. Fairbanks. [The autobiography of a Koyukon woman.]

Henry, Chief. 1979. *Chief Henry Yugh Noholnigee: The Stories Chief Henry Told*. Transcribed and edited by Eliza Jones. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. [Autobiographical accounts in Koyukon and English, with introduction.]

Herbert, Belle. 1982. *Shandaa: In My Lifetime*. Edited by Bill Pfisterer, transcribed and translated by Katherine Peter. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 210 pp. [Autobiographical, cultural, and historical narratives by Alaska's then oldest resident, in Gwich'in and English, with introduction and notes.]

Peter, Katherine. 1981. *Neets'aii Gwiindaii: Living in the Chandalar Country*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 147 pp. [Autobiography of life in the 1940s, composed in writing, with English translation, introduction.]

Peter, Katherine, editor. 1979. *Elders Speak*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center. [Personal narratives and statements by four Gwich'in elders, with English translations.]

Yukon-Koyukuk School District (publishers). Biography Series (separate volumes): *Henry Beatus Sr., Oscar Nictune, Joe Beetus, Moses Henzie, Frank Kobuk, Madeline Solomon, Roger Dayton, Edwin Simon, John Honea, Edgar Kallands, Josephine Roberts*. [Biographies of important local personages, from interviews with them.]

Traditional Stories

Attla, Catherine. 1983. *Sitsiy Yugh Noholnik Ts'in': As My Grandfather Told It*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center and Yukon-Koyukuk School District. 255 p. [Koyukon stories told in full traditional style, with facing English translations and numerous notes.]

Billum, John and Mildred Buck. 1979. *Atna' Yenida'a: Ahtna Stories*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center. 103 pp. [Traditional Ahtna stories with English translations, told for school use.]

Chapman, John W. and James Kari, eds. 1981. *Athabaskan Stories from Anvik*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 186 pp. [Traditional stories recorded around the turn of the century and recently revised with modern speakers of Deg Hit'an (Ingalik), with interlinear and free English translations.]

Deaphon, Deacon and Betty Petruska. 1980. *Nikolai Hwch'ihwzoya'*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center. 84 pp. [Traditional stories from the Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan people, with English translations.]

Fredson, John and Edward Sapir. 1982. *John Fredson Edward Sapir Haa Googwandak: Stories told by John Fredson to Edward Sapir*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 113 pp. [Gwich'in stories and autobiographical and cultural accounts recorded in 1923, with English translations, introduction, biography of Fredson.]

Krauss, Michael E., editor. 1982. *In Honor of Eyak: The Art of Anna Nelson Harry*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 157 pp. [Traditional stories, history, and oratory of the Eyak people, related to the Athabaskans, with English translations and extensive introduction and notes.]

Paul, Gaither and Ron Scollon. 1980. *Stories for My Grandchildren*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. [Traditional historical accounts and stories in Tanacross and English.]

Ridley, Ruth. 1983. *Eagle Han Huch'in Hòdök. Han Athabaskan Stories from Eagle*. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. 37 pp. [Short composed stories for children in Han and English.]

Tansy, Jake and Louise Tansy Mayo. 1982. *Indian Stories: Hwtsaay Hwt'aene Yenida'a*. Anchorage: Materials Development Center. 89 pp. [Traditional Ahtna stories with English translations.]

Tenenbaum, Joan M., editor. 1976. *Dena'ina Sukdu'a*. Four volumes. Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center. [Traditional stories of the Tanaina people of Nondalton, with interlinear and free English translations, introduction.]

Wassillie, Albert. 1980. *Nuvendaltun Ht'ana Sukdu'a. Nondalton People's Stories*. Anchorage: National Bilingual Materials Development Center. 50 pp. [Tanaina stories with English translations.]

Videotapes

Available from the Alaska State Film Library:

Profiles of Alaskans series: "Catherine Attla"; "Emmitt Peters"; "Thelma Saunders"

5th Annual BMEC: "Language Varieties: English Dialects and their Uses" (Department of Education, Dr. Orlando Taylor)

Available from the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, Nenana:

"Koyukon Regional Profiles"; "Huteetl: Koyukon Potlatch"

Available from the Alaska Native Language Center:

Talking Alaska series: "The Priceless Heritage of Alaska's Native Languages" (two videotapes); "Koyukon Athabaskan"; "Interethnic Communication"; "Dena'ina Athabaskan"; "Gwich'in Athabaskan"

INSTITUTIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Alaska Historical Commission
Old City Hall
524 W. 5th Avenue, Suite 207
Anchorage, AK 99501
(Publications, conferences)

Alaska Native Language Center
302 Chapman
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(Publications, consultation)

Alaska Pacific University Press
Alaska Pacific University
Anchorage, AK 99504
(Publications)

Alaska State Film Library
650 International Airport Road
Anchorage, AK 99502

Alaska State Library
Pouch G
Juneau, AK 99811

Alaska State Museum
Pouch FM
Juneau, AK 99811
(Traveling media kits, publications, traveling photographic exhibits)

Central Alaska Curriculum Consortium
314 Chapman
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(Bibliographies, instructional support materials)

College of Human and Rural Development
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(Consultation, instruction)

Fairbanks Native Association
Johnson-O'Malley Program
310-1/2 First Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(Publications)

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Indian Education Program
Box 1250
Fairbanks, AK 99707

Institute of Alaska Native Arts
P.O. Box 80583
Fairbanks, AK 99708
(Publications)

Materials Development Center
Rural Education, University of Alaska
2223 Spenard Road
Anchorage, AK 99503
(Publications)

University of Alaska Library, Archives
Oral History Project
Rasmuson Library
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(Especially the KUAC Radio Chinook *series.)*

University of Alaska Museum
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, AK 99701
(Tours, publications, traveling photographic exhibits)

Yukon-Koyukuk School District
Media Center
P.O. Box 309
Nenana, AK 99760
(Han Zaadlit'ee collection on Athabaskan languages and culture)

DISTRICTS SERVING ATHABASKAN STUDENTS

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Tanana City Schools
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Tanana, AK 99777
(907) 366-7203

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(907) 662-2515

Yukon-Koyukuk School District
Box 309
Nenana, AK 99760
(907) 832-5594

State of Alaska
Bilingual Education Enrollments 1981-1982

Language	*Number of Students, K-12*
Yup'ik Eskimo	3,923
Inupiaq Eskimo	3,200
Spanish	376
Koyukon Athabaskan	322
Korean	254
Gwich'in (Kutchin) Athabaskan	227
Filipino	211
Russian	191
Japanese	152
Aleut	145
St. Lawrence Island (Siberian) Yupik	135
Sugpiaq (Alutiiq)	123
Dena'ina (Tanaina) Athabaskan	111
Haida	54
Athabaskan (language not identified)	88
Upper Tanana Athabaskan	64
Vietnamese	62
Deg Hit'an (Ingalik) Athabaskan	42
Ahtna Athabaskan	36
Tanacross Athabaskan	27
Thai	26
Total	9,809*

*Student enrollments are derived from School District Reports provided to the Department of Education each school year. These figures are based on reports from June 1982.

Bilingual/Bicultural Education Programs
State of Alaska, 1981-1982
Distribution of Students by School District

Language	*Speakers A, B, C*	*Limited/Non-Speakers D, E*	*Total*
Yup'ik Eskimo			
Lower Kuskokwim	1,010	676	1,686
Lower Yukon	174	1,033	1,207
Southwest Region	250	257	507
Kuspuk	5	214	219
St. Mary's Public	42	46	88
Dillingham City	30	48	78
Lake & Peninsula	4	57	61
Bering Strait	0	31	31
Anchorage	7	19	26
Iditarod Area	0	18	18
Fairbanks	2	0	2
Total	1,524 (39%)	2,399 (61%)	3,923
Inupiaq Eskimo			
Northwest Arctic	141	1,273	1,414
North Slope Borough	474	418	901
Bering Strait	51	377	428
Nome City Schools	7	342	349
Fairbanks	2	45	47
Anchorage		29	29
Iditarod Area		14	14
Alaska Gateway		11	11
Dillingham City		7	7
Total	685 (22%)	2,516 (78%)	3,200
Gwich'in (Kutchin) Athabaskan			
Yukon Flats	47	138	185
Fairbanks		20	20
Anchorage		20	20
Northwest Arctic		2	2
Total	47 (21%)	180 (79%)	227
St. Lawrence Island (Siberian) Yupik			
Bering Strait	86	5	91
Nome City Schools	24	20	44
Total	110 (82%)	25 (18%)	135

Aleut			
Aleutian Region	10	10	20
Pribilof Islands		99	99
Unalaska		26	26
Total	10 (7%)	135 (93%)	145
Sugpiaq (Alutiiq)			
Kenai Pen. Bor.	4	60	64
Lake & Peninsula		56	56
Kodiak Island Bor.		3	3
Total	4 (3%)	119 (97%)	123
Dena'ina (Tanaina) Athabaskan			
Kenai Peninsula Bor.		68	68
Lake & Peninsula		32	32
Iditarod Area	7	4	11
Total	7 (6%)	104 (94%)	111
Spanish			
Anchorage	196	96	292
Fairbanks North Star	39	14	53
Juneau City & Bor.	5	2	7
Kodiak Island Bor.	4	2	6
Mat-Su Bor.	4	2	6
Kenai Pen. Bor.	3	1	4
Nome City Schools	3		3
Alaska Gateway	3		3
Sitka Bor. Schools	2		2
Total	259 (69%)	117 (31%)	376
Korean			
Anchorage	168	40	208
Fairbanks North Star	26	1	27
Juneau City & Bor.	2		2
Kodiak Island Bor.	8		8
Mat-Su Bor.	1	2	3
Kenai Pen. Bor.	6		6
Nome City Schools	2		2
Nenana City Schools	1		1
Total	217 (83%)	43 (17%)	260

Filipino			
Anchorage	74	35	109
Kodiak Island Bor.	44	8	52
Sitka Bor. Schools	23		23
Juneau City & Bor.	9	5	14
Fairbanks North Star	1	6	7
Kenai Pen. Bor.	3		3
Nome City Schools		2	2
Nenana City Schools	1		1
Total	155 (74%)	56 (26%)	211
Russian			
Kenai Pen. Bor.	191 (100%)	0 (0%)	19'
Japanese			
Anchorage	115	10	191
Fairbanks North Star	15		15
Sitka Bor. Schools	7		7
Kodiak Island Bor.	3	3	
Kenai Pen. Bor.		2	2
Juneau City & Bor.		1	1
Mat-Su Bor.	1		1
Total	141 (92%)	13 (8%)	154
Vietnamese			
Anchorage	19	0	19
Nome Public Schools	11	3	14
Juneau City & Bor.	18		18
Kenai Pen. Bor.	4		4
Kodiak Island Bor.	3		3
Fairbanks North Star	1	1	2
Sitka Bor. Schools	2		2
Total	58 (94%)	4 (6%)	62
Thai			
Anchorage	18		18
Fairbanks North Star	4	3	7
Kenai Pen. Bor.	1		1
Total	23 (88%)	3 (12%)	26

Alaska
Department of
Education